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Rolling Toward Better Buying Power 2.0

and Portfolio Management with the
Joint Center for Ground Vehicles

Daniel Pierson

When it comes to acquisition, it's safe to say affordability is foremost on the minds of defense policymakers and decision makers today. Achieving greater efficiency and productivity in defense spending is the focus of the acquisition community now and far into the future. This will require acquisition stakeholders and decision makers to come together at the enterprise level to maximize shrinking resources as well as leverage knowledge to make

Pierson is deputy program executive officer for Land Systems (Marine Corps).



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more informed decisions to produce better results for the warfighter.

It is in this context that the Joint Center for Ground Vehicles (JCGV) was undertaken just 3 years ago. The key to making the JCGV work will be how it is governed. We must bring the stakeholders and decision makers together to make more informed decisions at the enterprise level, maximizing available resources and knowledge.

Before explaining the JCGV construct and the benefits it can and will provide, one must first understand the benefits afforded under the Program Executive Officer (PEO) construct. The PEO construct in my opinion has been and will always be at the core of how to best manage large to small acquisition program portfolios. Unfortunately, as I see it, the PEO construct has been underutilized by senior leaders at all levels. These are organizations that each manage billions of dollars across the Fiscal Year Defense Plan and seldom get pulled in to share their knowledge and experience of what is working and what isn't. Historically, the tendency of senior leadership has been to focus on individual programs after problems have occurred. In doing so, valuable context can be lost when looking only at a single program, thus preventing a candid assessment of the complete problem set. A PEO can provide a much more holistic problem definition and broader solution sets across his or her portfolio when they are outlined in the context of the entire portfolio vs. a single system.

The Better Buying Power 2.0 initiatives (BBP 2.0) of Under Secretary Kendall now are looking at programs in the context of the entire portfolio for which an individual system resides cross-Service, with a focus on life-cycle affordability, and an

eye toward eliminating duplication of efforts. For this reason, I have faith that BBP 2.0 is on the right track.

I was working on the Joint Staff when the department was getting serious about portfolio management. We struggled to figure out how to manage from the Pentagon such large joint portfolios such as the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) portfolio without standing up huge organizations to do so. We also realized the majority of information and subject matter expertise required to do portfolio management resided within the Services where the work is done. It was when I became a deputy PEO that the lightbulb turned on. PEOs routinely do portfolio management as a normal course of their daily duties.

Senior leaders of the Pentagon must learn how to harness this inherent capability they themselves have chartered PEOs to do and roll it up to a more corporate level. This would require that members of individual Service headquarters staffs trust, and work closer with, their USD(AT&L) counterparts than is the case today in order to more effectively share information in a timely manner. Too much valuable information gets lost in the translation as a product is staffed through Service staffs en route to USD(AT&L), not to mention the time lost. Not trivial, but doable and very much needed if BBP 2.0 is to achieve its full potential.

By having the understanding of what a PEO is and does, one can begin to understand why the JCGV construct is a powerful model—a model that could be applied to various other PEOs with “like” or related portfolios, a model that if employed could provide the building blocks for USD(AT&L) to have the ability to do portfolio management at the departmental or corporate level. After all, it is the PEOs who provide the routine direction and oversight of their assigned program managers (PMs) and have the most influence over their programs’ success. Across and within the PEOs is where the majority of data and lessons learned exists from which to make meaningful change. To reach their full potential, the JCGV model and BBP 2.0 demand better communication and routine collaboration from USD(AT&L) through the Services to the PEOs and back to the USD(AT&L) without the laborious staffing processes currently established by each of the Services’ headquarters. A certain amount of trust and some ground rules must be developed to allow this level of collaboration.

Introducing the Joint Center for Ground Vehicles

Born from a “grass-roots” effort as a Joint Service construct, the Army-Marine Corps JCGV was launched 3 years ago by the organizations responsible for development, acquisition, and sustainment of the ground vehicle fleet. Today, the JCGV has the ability to provide a single authoritative voice in the ground vehicle community that could truly benefit the Department of Defense (DoD) and its industry partners by increasing efficiency, reducing costs, and synchronizing technology

development—ultimately, with the goal of improving the ground vehicle system development and acquisition domain across both the Army and the Marine Corps.

A key tenet of the JCGV is that it was formed from existing organizations and infrastructure with no additional layers of oversight. The JCGV does not exist in a physical building or change any existing authorities, but accomplishes its mission through open centralized collaborative governance, integrated planning and portfolio management, systems integration, technical expertise, and resource and data sharing. It exists throughout its founding organizations and infrastructure with a center of mass at the Detroit Arsenal, the nation’s Joint Center of Excellence for Ground Vehicles. The JCGV puts a deliberate focus on cross-cutting issues and synchronized technology development across the Army and Marine Corps ground vehicle efforts. This effort greatly enhances the technical community’s ability to support our programs of record due to the sense of priorities and needs identified by the Governance Board.

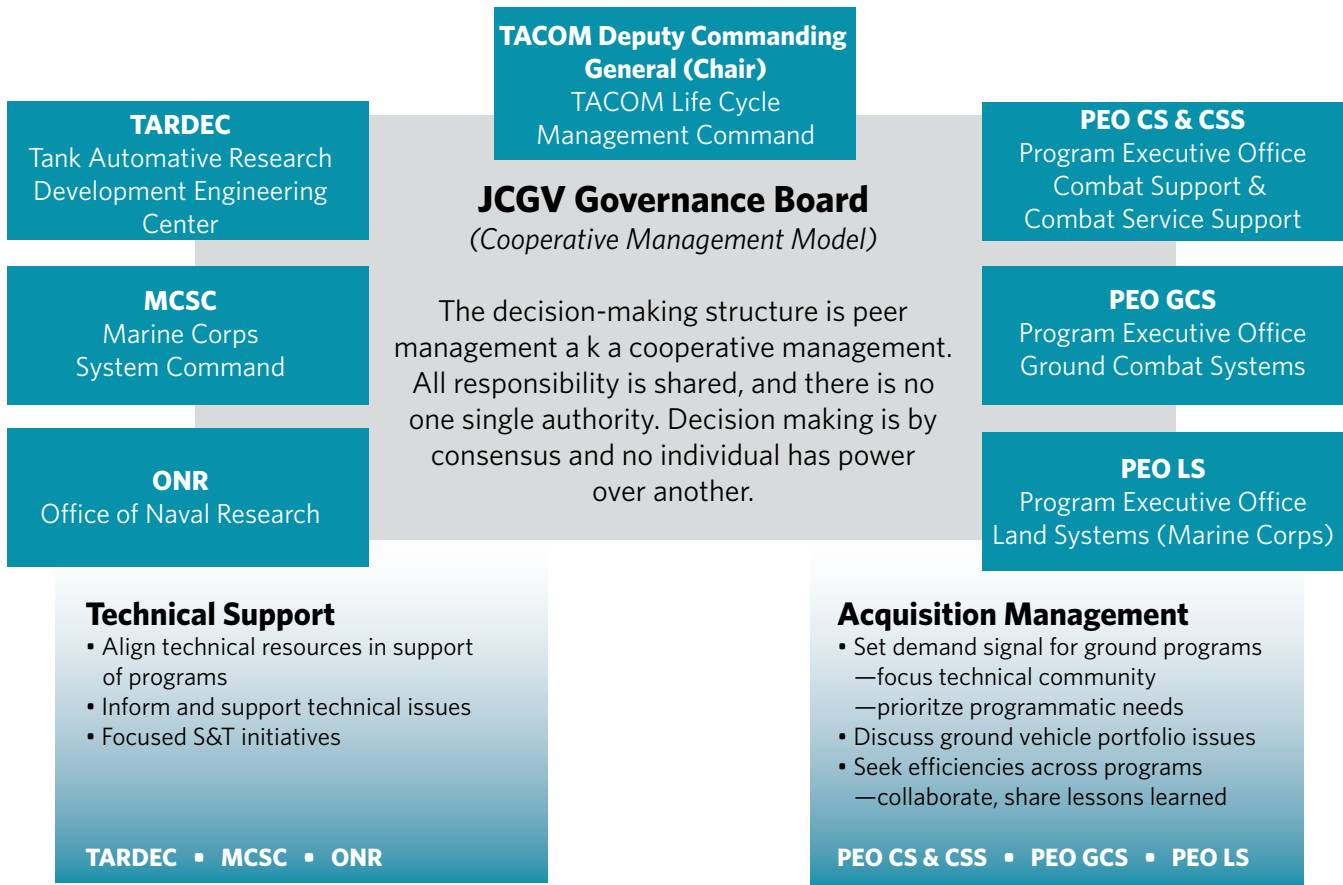
The JCGV Governance Board

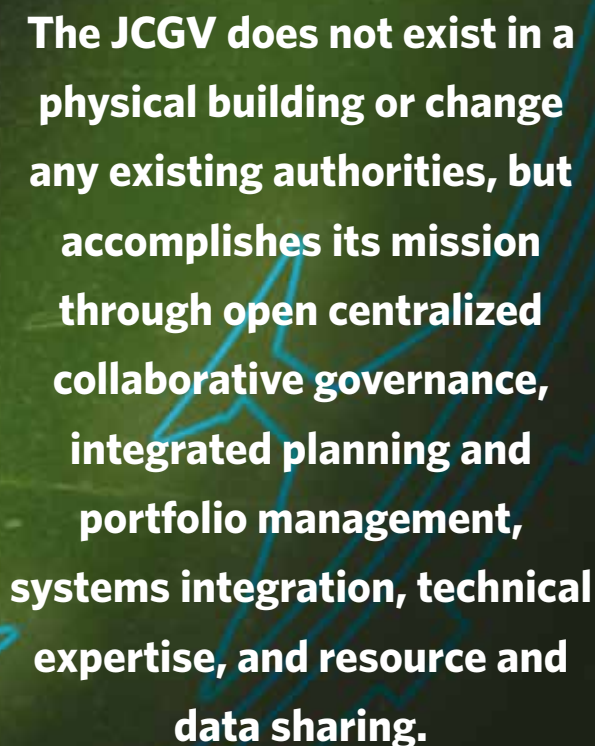
The key to the JCGV is the makeup of the Governance Board that guides and directs both the acquisition and technology communities in support of ground vehicle development (see Figure 1). The board is comprised of senior leadership from these organizations: PEO Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS), PEO Combat Support & Combat Service Support (PEO CS &

CSS), PEO Land Systems (Marine Corps) (PEO LS), Tank Automotive Research Development Engineering Center (TARDEC), Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC), Office of Naval Research (ONR), and TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (TACOM LCMC) as the governance board chair. The makeup of this board that meets quarterly with both acquisition and technical leaders will better align technical efforts from across the Joint community to programs of record, providing checks and balances impacting investment decisions. The board attempts to ensure member organizations function as an enterprise, looking at commonality across platforms and services, and developing shared analytical services in systems engineering processes that result in accelerated acquisition. The JCGV does not manage individual acquisition programs or limit existing authorities or responsibilities of the Services; rather, it reduces costs and better aligns resources and initiatives. The board attempts to align the technical efforts across the joint community to match up with Programs of Record (PORs). By placing a deliberate focus on cross-cutting issues that in the past were handled in “stovepipes,” we now are providing essential checks and balance that impact investment decisions.

There have been numerous examples in the past few years where industry has directly engaged at the most senior levels of the Services and USD(AT&L) with promises of system solutions seemingly effective for all their problems. Senior

Figure 1. JCGV Governance Board Members





The JCGV does not exist in a physical building or change any existing authorities, but accomplishes its mission through open centralized collaborative governance, integrated planning and portfolio management, systems integration, technical expertise, and resource and data sharing.

leaders expended a great many resources chasing these new “shiny objects” to no avail. The JCGV Governance Board could have been tasked to provide subject matter expert (SME) opinion and informational papers or reports that could have quickly contained these excursions with accurate data. There are many reasons industry goes around the technical community and acquisition chain straight to the top, the least of them an attempt to circumvent competition or accelerate the process. Our senior leaders need to prevent that and to trust their internal experts to better inform them of the true value and cost of what industry has presented. The JCGV Governance Board has access to and represents the ground vehicle domain SMEs in their entirety and should be used appropriately as a sanity check by senior leaders who are approached by industry with proposed solutions.

Creating a Culture of Stewardship

The JCGV’s quarterly Governance Board meetings, use of best practices, common tools and processes, continuous improvement to drive out inefficiencies, together with continued efforts to ensure a trained and ready workforce all add up to creating a culture of stewardship embodied in the recently released BBP 2.0. I don’t want to overstate our actual progress with the JCGV effort. We still have much work to do. But such

a model has great potential if properly employed and utilized at the USD(AT&L) level.

The JCGV can take ground vehicle development and acquisition to a whole new level. This will require senior-level buy-in and use of the Governance Board beyond how it now is used to run the JCGV. The JCGV’s efforts ensure the member organizations function as an enterprise, looking at commonality across platforms and Services and developing shared analytical services in systems engineering processes that result in more efficient and effective vehicle acquisition programs. The science and technology programs between the Army and Marine Corps relative to ground vehicles never have been closer and more coordinated as a result of the JCGV-fostered collaboration. One JCGV initiative seeks a common C4ISR architecture. Other JCGV initiatives include establishing common mobility requirements, common survivability testing standards, developing an operational energy evaluation and metrics definition, and documenting Modeling and Simulation tool sets/best practices.

Support of BBP 2.0 and Portfolio Management

The JCGV addresses the fundamental principles outlined in the BBP 2.0 Implementation Directive dated April 2, 2013. The Governance Board established under the JCGV is doing a lot of “thinking” by bringing together the three ground vehicle PEOs between the Army and the Marine Corps and the technology leaders who support them, chaired by the TACOM LCMC. Together, they increase the professional judgment collectively across the joint ground vehicle domain. The Governance Board is focused on its workforce, our “people.” We are forecasting the critical skill demands required in support of ground vehicle development to make sure the government maintains those skills needed for developing successful programs. The JCGV was built around “the basics” of what must be done to succeed, with an emphasis on our people, processes, organizations, and tools. We are able to “streamline” cross-cutting/cross-Service “decisions” via the Governance Board.

The details of how the JCGV addresses or could address many of the seven areas of BBP 2.0 can be the subject of another article. My contention is that, if the model that the JCGV represents is embraced by our Service leaders, department heads, and Congress, we could achieve much greater efficiencies and savings at the department level. From a portfolio perspective, each PEO in and of itself represents a portfolio. By grouping other “like” or related PEOs together as the JCGV has done, the building blocks would be assembled for portfolio management at the departmental, cross-Service level. We just need to work through the Service-level issues that impede or slow direct collaboration between the PEOs and USD(AT&L). This is recommended not to circumvent Service leadership, or trump Service positions, but rather to provide the USD(AT&L) with the most relevant and timely SME information to aid sound DoD decision making. &

The author can be reached at Daniel.Pierson@usmc.mil.